

P 051514Z JUN 08  
FM AMEMBASSY ZAGREB  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8370  
INFO EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS ZAGREB 000420

SIPDIS

FOR EUR/SCE, EUR/PPD, EUR/RPM AND EUR/ERA  
OSD FOR POPOVICH

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [EAGR](#) [ETRD](#) [KCRM](#) [EUC](#) [HR](#)

SUBJECT: ZAGREB WEEKLY ACTIVITY REPORT - JUNE 5, 2008

11. (U) RIJEKA SYNAGOGUE OFFICIALLY OPENED:

Last week, the Jewish community of Rijeka formally re-opened its synagogue after 15 years of reconstruction work. Vlado Kon, President of the Rijeka Jewish Community noted that this is the only synagogue in Croatia that has kept its original function to this day. Constructed between the two world wars, the small orthodox schull synagogue is one of only three synagogues in Croatia that survived the destruction of World War II. It was the smaller of two synagogues in Rijeka, the larger one was completely destroyed by German troops in 1944 and never reconstructed. The city of Rijeka made the largest donation to the 2 million HRK (\$430,000) project. The national Ministry of Culture and Primorsko-Rijeka County also made important contributions. The synagogue also serves as a Jewish cultural center hosting concerts, book presentations and exhibits. (MJelenc)

12. (U) THREE PUBLIC FIGURES BEATEN IN SEPARATE ATTACKS IN ZAGREB:

In the past two weeks, three prominent public figures have been physically assaulted on the streets of Zagreb, two with grave consequences. On May 17, two individuals beat Igor Radjenovic, CEO of Zagreb City Road Company "Zagrebacke Ceste" with a baseball bat. Radjenovic, a member of the opposition Social Democratic Party (SDP) and Chief-of-Staff to former Prime Minister Ivica Racan, sustained severe injuries to the head. Both Radjenovic and the media link this attack to his active cooperation with the Office for Suppression of Corruption and Organized Crime (USKOK) in an ongoing investigation into "Zagrebacke Ceste." Then, on the evening of June 2, two assailants armed with baseball bats badly beat Dusan Miljus, a leading reporter on organized crime issues. In the past six months, Miljus had publicly received threats from family members of persons associated with organized crime. As in the Radjenovic case, the attackers remain unknown. Earlier on June 2, three young men attacked Gordana Lukac-Koritnik, Croatia's Ombudsperson for Gender Equality, when she reportedly asked them to stop ethnic taunts and insults against visitors to the Serb Orthodox Church near her offices in downtown Zagreb. She sustained light injuries. All three of her assailants have reportedly been apprehended. (ZTomic)

13. (U) CRITICS CONTINUE TO QUESTION NEW LAW ON FREE LEGAL AID:

On May 16, the Parliament passed an amended Law on Free Legal Aid, one of the EU's required "benchmarks" for Croatia before EU accession negotiations on judicial affairs can begin. The law entered into force on May 24, but it will be February 2009 before clients actually begin to benefit from it, when regulations implementing the process are due to go into effect. In the meantime, the government will set up regional offices tasked to screen applicants and issue approvals for the service. An earlier draft of this law was withdrawn from Parliament in late 2007 under pressure from prominent human rights NGOs and some international organizations that objected to complicated administrative procedures. Critics wanted the GoC to allow easier access to free legal aid and remove stipulations that limited the NGOs' ability to offer primary legal assistance. In its adopted form, the law

reduces the number of documents potential clients will need to prove they qualify for assistance, and a last-minute amendment allows direct access to primary legal assistance from NGOs, i.e. without prior government approval. Ariana Vela of Transparency International, who leads a group of 20 NGOs involved in drafting the law, said the improved law is still flawed, containing contradictory stipulations. The law did not explain how NGOs that offer primary legal assistance will be able to register clients who arrive without a government referral, or how they will be reimbursed by the government for their work. The law also provides no budget for 50 new employees needed to set up the regional offices. The NGO consortium is discussing a likely request for review of the new law by the Constitutional Court. (MJelenc)

14. (U) CROATIA ACCEPTED INTO AGRICULTURAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM:

Croatia has been accepted into the Norman E. Borlaug International Agricultural Science and Technology Fellows Program (Borlaug Fellows Program). Six months of negotiations paid off during a recent visit to Croatia by a Borlaug International Affairs Specialist who toured Croatian bioscience colleges and decided that in 2009 Croatia should send 3 to 5 Borlaug Fellows to the United States for 5 to 8 weeks of scientific exchange. Training venues include U.S. land grant universities, USDA or other government agencies, private companies, not-for-profit institutions and international agricultural research centers. (AMisir)

15. (U) IMPLEMENTATION OF EU REQUIREMENTS HELPS OPEN CROATIA TO U.S. PORK EXPORTS:

After two years of negotiation between American and Croatian veterinary authorities, Croatia will accept freezing as a legitimate method of killing trichinae, a species of roundworm found in pork and wild game. Despite international recommendations and guidelines to the contrary, past Croatian legislation did not recognize this internationally accepted control method. However, as of July 1, Croatia will accept EU requirements on pork imports, including the recognition that trichinae can be killed by freezing. This will lift previous bans on U.S. pork exports to Croatia that regularly use this method, thereby opening up a \$3 million market for U.S. pork exporters. (AMisir)

Bradtke